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27 April 1987

Talking Points on Arias Peace Plan for ADDI's Briefing of HPSCI

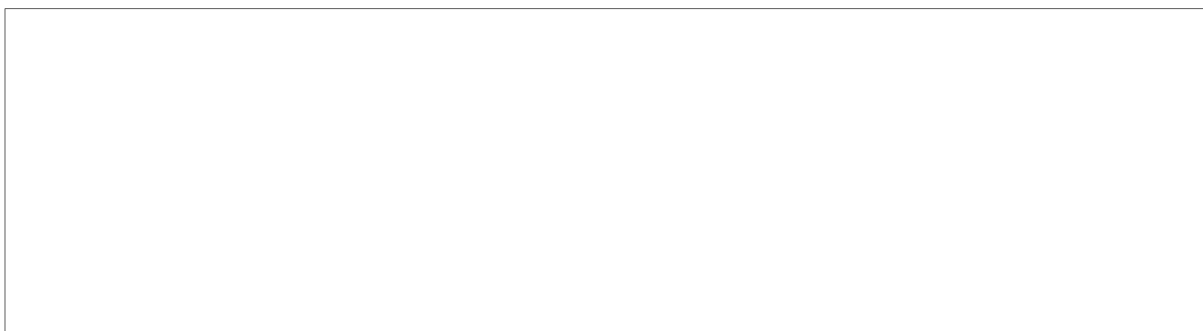
Recent talks among the Central American democracies have failed to resolve differences over the peace proposal of Costa Rican President Arias.

- According to US Embassy reporting, the Costa Rican technical team visiting El Salvador last week refused to consider significant changes or additions to the plan, particularly on the points of greatest concern to El Salvador--cease fire provisions and the timing of aid cutoffs to the anti-Sandinista insurgents.
- San Jose is pushing the other democracies to unite behind the draft before the Esquipulas summit, now scheduled for June. Arias apparently is convinced that the Sandinistas have fundamental problems with his proposal, according to US Embassy reports, and believes his tactics put the onus on Managua for making changes.
- Salvadoran officials doubt the Central Americans can work out a unified position and have told US officials they are determined to press for changes in the proposal.
- Last week, Honduran officials publicly complained that the Arias proposal has major defects.

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Current Guatemalan Strategy

Guatemalan President Cerezo's efforts to broker an agreement between the Core Four and Nicaragua probably will benefit the Sandinistas.



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- Meanwhile, Cerezo has given Salvadoran, Honduran, and US officials the impression he will press Arias to amend his plan to impose tighter conditions on the Sandinistas.

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The View From Managua

Managua has reacted cautiously to the Arias peace plan, seeking first to assess the reaction of other Central American actors.

- Sandinista spokesmen, while confirming that Ortega will attend the Esquipulas summit, claim that Managua is still studying the proposal. They have said that bilateral talks between Washington and Managua are a prerequisite for regional peace and that the plan should be linked with Contadora.
- The Sandinistas probably view the Arias plan in its present form as posing no threat to their regime, and we believe they may offer to accept it to split the Core Four and influence the domestic US debate on aid to the insurgents. [REDACTED]

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Contadora Strategy

The Contadora mediators already have praised the Arias proposal.

- Mexico appears to be spearheading an effort to fold its provisions into the current Contadora draft treaty, which the Core Four countries have rejected since it was proposed last June. [REDACTED]

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Key Provisions of the Current Contadora Draft Treaty and the Arias Peace Plan

Contadora

Arias

Entrance into force

Officially would take effect when ratified by all five Central American countries but would prohibit actions that would "frustrate" the purpose of the treaty in the interim.

Upon signature by the five Central American countries.

Verification

Would create a Verification and Control Commission on security matters (VCC) made up of four members proposed by the Contadora mediators and approved by each Central American country.

Would create commission consisting of the Secretaries General of the UN and the OAS and Foreign Ministers of the Contadora Group and the Support Group. Each country facing an armed insurgency is to form a National Commission for Reconciliation and Dialogue consisting of representatives from the government, the internal political opposition, the Catholic Church, and the Inter-American Human Rights Commission. Within six months, the Central American Presidents are to meet to evaluate progress in executing the treaty.

National reconciliation

Calls for democratic, representative, pluralistic political systems in accordance with national laws. Would guarantee equal conditions for all political parties to participate in election, with guaranteed access to mass media.

Upon signature, parties in conflict in each country are to begin a cease-fire. Each government is to begin a dialogue with all unarmed internal opposition groups and increase the democratic, representative, and pluralistic nature of its political system. Within 60 days, governments are to declare a general amnesty for insurgents and political prisoners; to restore freedoms of association, assembly, and speech; and to guarantee free access to mass media. During the first six months of next year, each government is to hold free, open, and democratic elections to choose representatives to a new regional parliament and, after that, equally free elections for positions at all levels of government in accordance with existing election schedules.

Ceilings on arms and troops

Treaty unclear on exact timing but apparently upon signature would require the five Central American countries to begin negotiations to determine "reasonable" levels of arms and troops. After ratification, parties apparently must suspend all military purchases except ammunition and spare parts. Within 60 days, the VCC would suggest limits and a schedule for reductions. If agreement is not reached, the VCC's proposals are to be implemented and, over a long term, restrictions on foreign military advisers, bases, and exercises are to be lifted.

Within 60 days of signing, the five Central American governments are to begin negotiations on the control and reduction of their current weapons inventories and on the number of their military forces.

(Continued)

Key Provisions of the Current Contadora Draft Treaty and the Arias Peace Plan (Continued)

Contadora

Arias

External support for insurgents

Would prohibit all political, military, financial, and logistic assistance to groups seeking the removal or destabilization of other governments. Would direct each government to devote all available means to deny such groups use of its territory. (No time period stipulated.)

Upon signature, all external aid to insurgents in the region is to end. Each government is to reaffirm its commitment not to provide safehaven or military assistance of any kind to groups trying to destabilize other countries.

Military exercises

Would suspend all international military exercises for 90 days after final ratification. Would allow one exercise per year until the parties agree on limitations on arms and military forces, after which exercises with forces from outside Central America would be prohibited. Only minor restrictions on national exercises. Controls would be lifted if an arms limitation agreement were not reached.

Not covered.

Foreign military and security advisers

Would eliminate all foreign military advisers within 180 days of signing. The VCC is to propose limits on the number of technical advisers to be permitted in the future. Controls are to be lifted if an arms limitation agreement is not reached.

Not covered.

Foreign Bases

Would eliminate all foreign military bases and foreign military schools within 180 days of signing and prohibit the establishment of new ones. Controls would be lifted if an arms limitation agreement were not reached.

Not covered.

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Central American Positions Regarding Arias Plan:

Costa Rica	Accepts	Opposes any substantive changes.
Honduras	Opposes as is	Wants following changes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Both anti-Sandinista insurgents and the unarmed Nicaraguan opposition included in initial dialogue with the Sandinistas.- Cease fire and amnesty to be established by dialogue with insurgents.- Cutoff of aid to insurgents occurs after amnesty and cease fire.- Democratic elections in Nicaragua sooner than Arias plan.- Some Contadora provisions on security issues to be incorporated.- Stronger verification measures which include linking implementation of the plan with national elections and restoration of political rights in Nicaragua.
El Salvador	Opposes as is	Shares most Honduran concerns about Arias plan and worries that its arms control provisions could harm Salvadoran counterinsurgency effort. Believes anti-Sandinista rebels can only be included in talks with Nicaraguan government once they have agreed to disarm.
Guatemala	Supports as basis for Regional Negotiations	Opposes Honduran and Salvadoran insistence on dialogue with armed opposition. Wants to prevent Nicaragua's isolation at peace talks while seeking to promote own role as mediator. Will not insist on democratization as initial step in negotiations.
Nicaragua	Conditionally Accepts	Uncomfortable with provisions on internal democratization, including eventual dialogue with armed opposition. May accept plan as way to split Core Four and thwart renewed US funding for insurgents.